

Can Lamberon
60 - incident regarding an interview on 6WF

Such a strange thing happened on 12/6/1992 when Michael Schultz of 6WF interviewed H. Margaret Wilson regarding her grandfather Wm. Shakespeare Hall. The interview was taped at 3.45pm on Thursday 11th June 1992 and was timed to go to air at 9pm. However due to time scheduled restrictions it was postponed until the following night (Friday 12th)

It so happened that a Battye Library volunteer called "Ted" was sorting a box of old papers of a miscellaneous nature on Friday 12th June 1992. He had his radio on and heard the talk about Shakespeare Hall - about whom he knew nothing. He continued sieving through the papers when he suddenly realised he was holding four sheets of foolscap paper headed "Statement of Wm. Shakespeare Hall of the schooner 'Ethel' in reference to the late hurricane of the 7th inst. who says on 24th January 1881" etc etc

Mrs Pat Paterson of Battye very kindly phoned to tell me of the coincidence and later sent me a photocopy of the four sheets of evidence regarding the sinking of the "Ethel" and the loss of life of a young man called John O'Grady junior. His father John O'Grady senior, Shakespeare Hall and several "natives" survived.

Apparently, O'Grady and Hall went to Boolgoorn Creek (Mary Ann Patch) to "clean" the vessel. A gale came up & they decided to let go their big anchor with 15 fathoms of chain. They soon realised it was a hurricane - "the vessel was dashed on the mangroves with immense force". O'Grady senior told the natives to jump into the water. Which they did willingly. He then handed them his sea chest which he had locked. They followed the natives & hung on to the mangroves but the tide rose rapidly & the mangroves were nearly under water - having risen 5 or 6 feet in a short time. O'Grady junior was washed off his treetop & he joined Shakespeare who realised that the tree top couldn't hold two men, gave up his place to the young man. The waves were

so high that they were being submerged at intervals of 2 seconds and they were becoming exhausted. Shakespeare's branch broke off & he was washed away - when he surfaced O'Grady^{sr} was still on his tree. S'pence tried swimming but it was useless as his limbs were benumbed so he determined to just support himself in the water & let to drift ~~him~~ ashore. When he touched ground he shouted as loud as he could. O'Grady senior immediately followed Shakespeare to land, asking "if I had seen his son"?

The weather clearing a bit they saw another wreck with one white man and some natives clinging to the top side of their vessel which turned out to be John Brockman's cutter "Sarah" who had two white men and some natives on board. O'Grady looked in vain for his son & when he came ashore they all made for the hills, being all naked, cold, hungry and exhausted. The natives dug pits in the sand, into which they got to try to warm themselves. At sun-down Brockman got some wet blankets for them to sleep under. At about 8 pm. the wind blew with greater fury and they all felt the earth shake. The next morning two more cutters "Adela" and "Fortescue" joined them - they too had noticed the same phenomenon. About 10 pm. one of the men found the little bottle in which O'Grady junior had sealed in some matches and they were able to make a fire & procured some provisions from one of the cutters. Subsequently the natives found young O'Grady's body which they interred. The grave being marked with his name and date of death cut in it. Everybody in the vicinity came to the conclusion that there had been a tidal wave.

The Statement was signed by W. A. Hall and witnessed by Edw. A. Lemon P.C. at Bossack 24th January 1881.

Abbreviated by H. M. Wilson 25/7/1992.

I have had a few coincidences happen to me - this is one of them. Our Grandfather Shakespeare Hall was very powerfully built & a very strong swimmer. On his death in 1895 (he had a heart attack & drowned when taking a swim one very hot night in Bassano) the press contained ^{an account} about him swimming for 15 hrs in another willy willy. (Cyclone)

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